

Message Text

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H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 SMS-01 /085 W
-----108603 251653Z /44

R 251531Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6036
INFO USICA WASHDC
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 20430

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SCUL, UR
SUBJECT: VOLUME OF SOVIET NONCONFORMIST LITERATURE

1. SEVERAL OF MOSCOW'S MORE NON-CONFORMIST LIT-
ERARY FIGURES ARE ASSEMBLING WHAT IS DESCRIBED AS A
VOLUME OF 1,000 TYPED PAGES TO BE AVAILABLE IN 12
COPIES IN NOVEMBER OF THIS YEAR. NOT INTENDED AS
A VEHICLE FOR DISSIDENT WRITERS, OR FOR ANTI-REGIME
COMMENTARY, OR FOR ANY POLITICAL COMMENTARY AT ALL,
THE COLLECTION WILL BE ISSUED UNDER THE TITLE
"METROPOL."

2. SCRUPULOUSLY ADHERING TO SOVIET LAWS ON
DUPLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF WRITTEN MATERIALS,
"METROPOL" S CREATORS WILL NOT XEROX A SINGLE PAGE.
THE 12-COPY TYPEWRITTEN "RUN" IS THEIR LIMIT.

3. TO MAKE THE "BOOK" MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN COULD
BE EXPECTED FROM 1,000 TYPEWRITTEN PAGES, COVER,
SECTION AND PAGE LAYOUTS WILL BE DESIGNED BY THE
TAGANKA THEATER'S CHIEF DESIGNER,
DAVID BOROVSKY.

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4. CHIEF AMONG THOSE ORGANIZING THE SELECTION,
COLLECTION AND COLLATION OF WORKS IS VASILY
AKSYONOV, WITH THE PRIMARY HELP OF ALEKSANDER BITOV,
WHO IS PROVIDING SHORT STORIES, FAZIL ISKANDER
(SHORT STORIES) AND, IT WOULD SEEM, BULAT
OKUDSHAVA (PART OF A NOVEL) AND BELLA AKHMADULLINA

(POETRY AND A SHORT STORY). AMONG OTHERS WHOSE WORKS ARE TO BE INCLUDED ARE F. GORENSTEIN (NOVEL), YEVGENIY POPOV (SHORT STORIES), P. KOZHEVNIKOV (SHORT NOVEL), B. VAKHTIN (SHORT NOVEL) AND V. YEROFEYEV (SHORT NOVEL). AKSYONOV HIMSELF HOPES TO BE ABLE TO FINISH A PLAY IN TIME FOR INCLUSION. THERE IS DISCUSSION OF A POETRY SECTION TO INCLUDE WORKS BY VLADIMIR VISOTSKIY AND ANDREY VOZNESENSKIY, AMONG OTHERS, BUT THIS SECTION SEEMS TO BE THE LEAST WELL IN HAND THUS FAR. A SECTION ON THE CURRENT SCENE IN SOVIET CULTURAL LIFE IS NOW SCHEDULED TO HAVE, AMONG OTHERS, ARTICLES BY MARK ROZOVSKIY ON THE THEATER, A. KONCHALOVSKIY ON THE CINEMA, EDISON DENISOV ON MUSIC, V. RAKITIN ON ART, N. TROSNIKOV ON PHILOSOPHY AND V. LEVIN ON CRITICISM.

5. OF "METROPOL"'S ONLY 12 COPIES, AT LEAST TWO ARE ALREADY EARMARKED: ONE TO BORIS STUKALIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLISHING, PRINTING AND THE BOOK TRADE, THE OTHER TO THE UNION OF WRITERS. APPORTIONING THE REMAINING TEN COPIES WILL BE A STAGGERING PROBLEM UNLESS AUTHORITY IS GIVEN TO REPRODUCE THEM IN SOME WAY. FOREIGN PUBLISHERS HAVE ALREADY GOTTEN WIND OF THE PROPOSED VOLUME, WITH GALLIMARD IN PARIS

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AND MICHIGAN'S ARDIS PRESS REPORTEDLY ALREADY EXPRESSING INTEREST.

COMMENT: AS FOR POSSIBLE PUBLICATION ABROAD EVEN IF NO SOVIET PUBLISHING HOUSE PRINTS "METROPOL" AFTER IT IS ASSEMBLED, WE ARE REMINDED THAT SEVERAL WORKS BY SOVIET AUTHORS HAVE BEEN PRINTED ABROAD IN RECENT YEARS WITHOUT FIRST HAVING BEEN ISSUED IN THE SOVIET UNION AND, THUS, WITHOUT ANY PARTICIPATION OF THE SOVIET AUTHORS RIGHTS AGENCY (VAAP) IN THE PROCESS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO OPEN NEGATIVE ACTIONS AGAINST THEIR AUTHORS, THE ARGUMENT GOES, BECAUSE THESE WORKS WERE NOT POLITICAL IN THEIR NATURE AND THE AUTHORS HAD NOT ESTABLISHED ANTI-REGIME DISSIDENT POSITIONS. THIS DEVELOPMENT, AND THE UNUSUALLY WARM RECEPTION ACCORDED THE ARDIS PRESS'S CARL AND ELLENDEA PROFFER WHEN THEY EXHIBITED THEIR PRESS'S BOOKS AT THE 1977 MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR, ENCOURAGED "METROPOL"'S COMPILERS TO BEGIN THEIR WORK WITH SOME CONFIDENCE IN ITS SUCCESS.

THE MORE SUBSTANTIAL MOMENTUM HAS BEEN GENERATED BY THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF A PHENOMENON OF THE MOSCOW LITERARY SCENE, OF THE KLUB RAZKAZCHIKOV (THE STORYTELLERS CLUB), WHICH MEETS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE WRITERS UNION AND ON ITS PREMISES TO READ ALOUD AND DISCUSS AVANT GARDE WORKS, OR SOMETIMES MERELY THOSE WHICH HAVE NOT YET BEEN PUBLISHED, OR ARE IN SKETCHY FORM OR HAVE BEEN REFUSED PUBLICATION ON AESTHETIC GROUNDS. POLITICAL WRITING IS AVOIDED, OPEN CHALLENGE TO THE CONCEPT

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OF GLAVLIT CENSORSHIP IS MUTED, AND THE DISCUSSIONS APPARENTLY ARE HOT AND HEAVY, AS THE YOUNGER WRITERS SEEK THE COUNSEL (AND APPROVAL) OF THEIR MORE ESTABLISHED COLLEAGUES WITH WHOM THEY FEEL THEY CAN COMMUNICATE, NOTABLY AKSYONOV, BITOV, ISKANDER, YURIY TRIFONOV, AMONG THOSE WHO REPORTEDLY ATTEND REGULARLY. NOT ONLY THE YOUNGER WRITERS BRING THEIR WORKS TO THESE MEETINGS. EVEN THE BETTER KNOWN WRITERS READ THEIR WORKS ,SPECIFICALLY TO SEEK CRITICAL REACTION FROM THE YOUNGER GENERATION. THE SUCCESS OF THE KLUB RAZKAZCHIKOV GIVES SOME CREDENCE TO THE JUDGMENT OF THE "METROPOL"S SPONSORS THAT THEIR VOLUME WILL BE READ WITH INTEREST AT THE WRITERS UNION AND, IF IT DOES NOT ELICIT RINGING PRAISE FROM THE UNION'S KEEPERS OF ORTHODOXY, WILL NOT MEET WITH FORMAL EXPRESSIONS OF DISAPPROVAL. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LITERATURE, DATA
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW20430
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780348-0990
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780823/aaaaatix.tel
Line Count: 168
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1621506
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VOLUME OF SOVIET NONCONFORMIST LITERATURE
TAGS: SCUL, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bb5a755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014